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ABSTRACT

This book presents a series of personal essays in which the author analyzes and dramatizes the significance of subordination in academic life. Academic life is examined in terms of issues (such as sexual harassment) and structures (such as the figure of the dissertation director) but especially in terms of texts. The book looks at the stream of trivial but imposing memos circulated, the tyranny of dissertation advisers, the tactless anonymity of rejection letters, and the systemic dilemma of dealing with student papers. Also included are jokes, anecdotes, and parodies, including some sample resignation letters. The essays underscore the author's contention that academic writing in its various forms is united by the imperative of disguise. After an introductory chapter, the individual essays are: (1) "Missionaries and Knots in Sexual Harassment"; (2) "Personal Authority, Colonial Power, and Dissertation Directors"; (3) "Wheels, Cogs, Oil Cups, and Rejection Letters"; (4) "The Green Bean Campaign in the Memo"; (5) "High Flying at Low Levels: Hierarchy, Composition, and Teaching"; and (6) "Writing Resignation: The Donkey on the Minaret and the President's Papers." (Individual chapters contain references.) (DB)

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